

pd

WITCHES' TALES

FEBRUARY 1970
50¢

FEATURING:

THE
MUMMIES

WITCH'S
CLAWS

THE DEMON
FROM
BEYOND

PLUS OTHER
WITCHES' TALES
THAT WILL
HAUNT
YOU



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WITCHES TALES

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Carl Burgos, Editor

Irving Foss, Art Director

Kara Jackson, Art Editor

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THE WITCH'S CLAW

THE CAT SAW US KILL AUNT ANNIE! I CAN'T STAND THE WAY IT LOOKS AT US! WALTER, I'M AFRAID OF THE CAT!

DON'T WORRY! I'LL KILL IT, TOO!

GRACE AND WALTER BROCK WERE A MURDEROUS PAIR! THEY KILLED AN OLD WOMAN AND HER BELOVED LITTLE ANIMAL WITHOUT A TWINGE OF CONSCIENCE! THEY THOUGHT THE THING WAS FINISHED! WHAT THEY DIDN'T REALIZE WAS THE GHASTLY, HORRIBLE FATE IN STORE FOR THEM...

WALTER AND GRACE BROCK LIVED WITH WALTER'S RICH AUNT...

YOU'RE JUST A PAIR OF LOAFERS! GET OUT IN THE KITCHEN AND DO THE DISHES, GRACE! DO YOU THINK I'M GOING TO DO ALL THE WORK AROUND HERE?

I'LL DO THE DISHES... DON'T GET SO EXCITED!

AN' YOU, WALTER! TOO LAZY TO GET A JOB!



AND LATER, IN THE KITCHEN...

SHE'S A NASTY OLD WOMAN! I HATE HER!

IF ONLY SHE'D DIE! WE'D INHERIT IT ALL! I WONDER... WHY NOT? THAT WOULD FIX EVERYTHING!

GRACE! IF SOME NIGHT WE KILLED HER...!

I WISH WE DARED!



WE'D SAY SHE'D GONE TO VISIT FRIENDS OUT WEST! SHE NEVER TALKS TO ANYONE ABOUT HER AFFAIRS!

THEY WERE STILL THINKING OF IT WHEN THEY RETURNED TO THE LIVING ROOM, AND...

GET AWAY FROM ME YOU HELLION...!



YAAH! GET OUT OF MY WAY YOU WRETCHED ANIMAL!



HOW DARE YOU! GET OUT OF MY HOUSE, BOTH OF YOU! I'LL CHANGE MY WILL TOMORROW, CUT YOU OFF WITHOUT A CENT! GO ON... GET OUT!

AAAIEEEEE!



AND THEN...

SHE'S DEAD!
GRACE, WE'RE
RICH... RICH!

SUDDENLY...

THE CAT! OH,
WALTER...
LOOK AT THE
CAT!

I'LL KILL THE
ROTTEN THING...
I'LL GET RID
OF IT!

IT SAW US KILL THE OLD
WOMAN! KILL IT, WALTER!
KILL IT!

CRACK!

AND IN ANOTHER MOMENT...

SO A CAT
HAS NINE
LIVES, EH? WELL
I SMASHED ALL
NINE AT ONCE!
HA! HA!

THE MURDEROUS PAIR CARRIED THE BODY OF OLD ANNIE
WALSH OUT TOWARDS THE GARDEN TO BURY IT! AND...

WE'LL GET AWAY
WITH IT, WON'T
WE, WALTER?

SURE, AN' WE WON'T HAVE TO
LIVE LIKE THIS! YOU'LL HAVE
FINE CLOTHES, GRACE!... AN'
A BIG HOUSE, NOW THAT WE
HAVE HER MONEY!

AND OUT IN THE GARDEN...

SHOULDN'T WE
BURY THE CAT
HERE, TOO?

SURE WE SHOULD!
HA, HA! LET'S GO
GET IT!



BUT WHEN THEY GOT TO THE LIVING ROOM...

IT... IT
ISN'T
HERE!

QUEER... IT
WAS LYING
RIGHT HERE!



MAYBE I DIDN'T QUITE KILL
IT! IT PROBABLY CRAWLED
AWAY SOMEWHERE
TO DIE!

IT... IT
OUGHT TO
BE SOMEWHERE
AROUND HERE!
BUT IT ISN'T!
WALTER... I
DON'T LIKE
THIS!



BACK IN THE GARDEN, WALTER FINISHED HIS GRISLY
TASK!

THERE! THAT
DOES IT!

I STILL WISH WE COULD
FIND THAT CAT...



WE'LL FIND IT! IF IT ISN'T
DEAD YET, WE'LL KILL IT!
NOW, STOP WORRYIN'!



DEAD OR ALIVE... THEY NEVER FOUND THE CAT! BUT
THEY HAD NO TROUBLE FORGETTING IT! WITH OLD
ANNIE WALSH'S MONEY THAT WAS EASY...



THIS IS THE
LIFE, EH,
GRACE?

IT SURE
IS!

FOR MONTHS WALTER NEVER EVEN THOUGHT OF ANNIE WALSH'S CAT! BUT ONE SUMMER MORNING, WALTER AWAKENED WITH A START...

WHAT TH--? I MUST'VE SCRATCHED MYSELF! I WONDER HOW I DID THAT TO MY HAND?



THE BLOOD WAS ALREADY DRY... WALTER THOUGHT NOTHING OF IT... BUT THE NEXT NIGHT HE HAD A HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE...

SOMETHING ATTACKING ME! SOMETHING HIDEOUS! GET AWAY FROM ME YOU... YOU THING!



SOMETHING INVISIBLE... HORRIBLE... ATTACKING HIM... **SCRATCHING HIM...**

I CAN'T STOP IT FROM SCRATCHING ME! YAAAHHH!



AND FOR AN INSTANT, IT SEEMED THAT THE GHOST OF THE DEAD CAT WAS STARING DOWN AT HIM...



STOP! AAIEE!

THEN HIS SCREAMS AWAKEN GRACE, AND...

ONHH! AGH! AAIEEE!

WALTER! WAKE UP! YOU'RE HAVING A NIGHTMARE!



I DREAMED SOMETHING WAS ATTACKING ME! IT WAS HORRIBLE!

WALTER! YOU'RE ALL **SCRATCHED!** I DON'T UNDERSTAND!



THERE MUST BE AN EXPOSED NAIL AROUND HERE! I MUST'VE TOSSED AROUND AGAINST IT!

WALTER, I... I FEEL SO QUEER... EVER SINCE WE KILLED THAT WRETCHED CAT... I CAN'T EXPLAIN... BUT...

AND THEN, SUDDENLY...

GRACE! LOOK AT YOUR FINGERNAILS! THERE'S BLOOD UNDER THEM!

WHAT?



THEN, AS WALTER STARED AT HIS TERRIFIED WIFE...

YOUR EYES ARE CHANGING! THEY... THEY LOOK LIKE...

WALTER... S-SOME-- SOMETHING IS THE MATTER WITH ME! OH-H!

AND THEN, A GHASTLY METAMORPHOSIS...

GOODBYE, WALTER...



OH, NO! ... NO!

PFFSSST!

NO... NO! AAAIEEE!



THE END...

WEIRD VENGEANCE

WHEEE!
WHEEEE!



GEORGE LLOYD STOOD BEFORE THE JUDGE AND HEARD THE SENTENCE... **GUILTY!** BUT HE CLAIMED HE WAS FRAMED AND SWORE VENGEANCE ON HIS EX-PARTNERS...

IT'S THE JUDGEMENT OF THIS COURT THAT YOU ARE GUILTY AND YOU ARE SENTENCED TO FIVE YEARS IN THE PENITENTIARY!

BUT, I'M INNOCENT! I'VE BEEN FRAMED BY MY PARTNERS... LOOK AT THEM...!

LOOK AT THEM. SAM ARROW. AL JORDAN. EDDIE GANZ. THEY ARE THE GUILTY ONES! THEY'VE ALWAYS TRIED TO FORCE ME OUT OF THE BUSINESS AND NOW THEY'VE DONE IT. BUT I'LL BE BACK AND WITH VENGEANCE. THEY SHALL DIE BY THE VERY THING THAT MAKES THEM SUCCESSFUL... **HOLIDAYS!**



AND SO THEY PUT YOU AWAY, GEORGE FOR FIVE YEARS... THEY THOUGHT!

AND YOUR PLAN WORKED... YOU ESCAPED!

ANOTHER FEW DAYS AND I'LL BE FREE FREE TO START MY CRUSADE OF VENGEANCE!

WANT A LIFT, DOC?

THANKS! MY CAR BROKE DOWN A WAY BACK AND I'M TRYING TO GET TO THE CITY. IT'S AN EMERGENCY CALL



OTHERS HEARD ABOUT YOUR ESCAPE... ESPECIALLY THE ONES YOU HOPED WOULD HEAR ABOUT IT!

SO HE'S ESCAPED! SO WHAT? THE COPS WILL GET HIM BEFORE HE GETS TO THE CITY

YEAH AND HE SWORE VENGEANCE ON THE THREE OF US. I'M WORRIED!

I DON'T THINK SO. GEORGE IS A SMART GUY! HE KNEW WE FRAMED HIM... WHICH IS MORE THAN THE COURT'S COULD FIGURE OUT



AND LOOK AT THE DATE... ST. VALENTINE'S DAY!

SO WHAT. DO YOU THINK? HE'S GONNA TURN INTO CUPID!



THAT NIGHT A STRANGE
FIGURE APPEARED...

I DON'T LIKE IT
...TOO QUIET
OUT THERE!

BUT IT'S TOO
NICE A NIGHT
TO SPEND INSIDE..
MIGHT AS WELL
GET SOME
AIR!

ST. VALENTINE'S
DAY, EDDIE REMEMBER?
AND THIS WAS
REALLY AN
ACT OF
LOVE!

AND THE NEXT DAY..

BUT HE KILLED
EDDIE JUST THE WAY
HE SAID HE WOULD
AND WE'RE
NEXT!

DON'T WORRY
ABOUT THAT
LUNATIC..
TH' COPS'LL
GET HIM FOR
SURE THIS TIME
AND IT'LL BE
FOR
MLRDER!

A WEEK
LATER..

THEY
HAVEN'T
CAUGHT HIM
YET AND I
KNOW HE'S
BEEN WATCHIN'
ME

IT'S JUST NERVES, AL! THE
POLICE CALLED ME THIS
MORNING AND SAID THEY
HAD SOME CLUES AS TO
WHERE THEY COULD FIND
HIM! YOU'LL SEE..
THEY'LL HAVE
HIM IN A FEW
DAYS!

AH-H, YOU
DON'T REALLY
BELIEVE HE'D TRY
ANYTHING AFTER
MURDERING EDDIE?
WHY HE'D HAVE EVERY
COP IN THE STATE
AFTER HIM!

YEAH,
BUT LOOK
AT THE DATE
HERE IT'S
WASHINGTON'S
BIRTHDAY!

LATER AT
AL'S FARM.

I GUESS
SAM WAS RIGHT!
...HE WON'T
TRY ANYTHING
TODAY!

NO

NO



I CANNOT
TELL A LIE...
BUT YOU DID...
AND NOW YOU
WILL PAY FOR
IT!

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER...

I DON'T KNOW
WHY I'M SO WORRIED
...BUT I GOT A FEELING
THAT SOMEBODY'S
BEEN FOLLOWING
ME! AHH JUST A
CASE OF NERVES!



SQUEEKEE!

SURE! WHAT
HAVE I GOT TO
WORRY ABOUT?
NOW I OWN--

TOO LATE YOU SEE THE
STRING ATTACHED TO THE
KNOB OF YOUR DOOR!



HOH

CLICK



TODAY IS
THE 4TH OF
JULY 6AM...
INDEPENDENCE
DAY!



AND TODAY
THE WORLD IS
FREE OF THE
LAST OF MY
EX-PARTNERS!

THE MONTHS PASSED AND GEORGE FORGOT ABOUT HIS CRIMES, BUT THE POLICE DIDN'T-- AND ONE DAY THEY SPOTTED HIM...

IF I CAN ONLY GET THROUGH THIS CROWD TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STREET... THEY'LL NEVER CATCH ME!

OUT O' THE WAY, BRAT!

GRAB THAT MAN! STOP HIM!



I'LL CUT ACROSS IN FRONT OF THIS TANK!



WELL, AT LEAST IT'LL SAVE THE STATE THE COST OF ELECTROCUTING HIM!

FUNNY THING, PAT, BUT DO YOL KNOW WHAT TODAY IS? **ARMISTICE DAY!**



THE END

THE MUMMIES



THE STRANGER HAD
KILLED SWIFTLY AND WELL
HE KNEW THAT DEAD
MEN TELL NO TALES...
AND WALLS DON'T
SPEAK EXCEPT WHEN
THOSE WALLS CONTAIN
A SECRET THAT SHREKS
TO HEAVEN OF **HORROR**
SO NAMELESS THAT
ONLY THE DEAD CAN
WHISPER... TO THE
DEAD!!!

MANY PEOPLE HATE THE BIG CITY.
EMILY BROWNE HATED IT BECAUSE
SHE COULDN'T FIND IN IT THE PEACE-
FULL SOLITUDE SHE CRAVED...

GETTING AWAY MEANT NOT ONLY **DISTANCE...** BUT
PRIVACY! THE MOST ISOLATED UNINHABITED
NEIGHBORHOOD WAS CONSIDERED TO BE **IDEAL** BY
EMILY...



I HATE THE NOSE
THE SMELL THE SIGHT
OF PEOPLE. I'VE GOT
TO GET AWAY FROM
PEOPLE!



B-BUT, MISS BROWNE,
NOBODY COMES HERE!
THE HOUSE IS PRACTICALLY
INACCESSIBLE

GOOD I DETEST
HUMAN BEINGS AND
EVERYTHING THEY DO
OR SAY! THIS HOUSE
WILL SUIT ME MOST
ADMIRABLY!

SO EMILY BROWNE MOVED INTO A PLACE WHERE NO VOICE WAS HEARD...NOT EVEN HER OWN! FOR EVEN EMILY'S THOUGHTS WERE SPOKEN INWARDLY!

HOW PEACEFUL IT IS! NO TRAFFIC, NO CROWDS...NO SALESMEN KNOCKING ON MY DOOR! JUST PERFECT, DELICIOUS QUIET!



WEEKS PASSED! NO ONE CAME AND NO ONE WENT! THE WEEDS GREW HIGHER, EMILY VENTURED OUT ONLY TO BUY THE VERY FEW THINGS SHE NEEDED...

I'LL SPEND THE REST OF MY DAYS HERE! IT'S EXACTLY WHAT I'VE WANTED ALL MY LIFE!



ONE NIGHT, WHILE SHE WAS NAILING UP A PICTURE...

T-THAT'S FUNNY! THE WALL'S GIVING AWAY!



GOOD GRACIOUS!... (GASP!)... T-TWO BODIES! THEY'VE BEEN HERE A LONG TIME! BUT WHAT ARE THEY DOING IN THE WALL? WHY AREN'T THEY BURIED... IN THE GRAVEYARD?



P-POOR THINGS! HOW LONG HAVE THEY BEEN WALLED UP? I IMAGINE THE REAL ESTATE AGENT DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE HERE, OR ELSE HE'D HAVE MENTIONED THEM TO ME!



I'M GLAD THEY'RE HERE, THEY DON'T MAKE A BIT OF NOISE... THEY STARE AT YOU BUT THEY DON'T SPEAK! WHATEVER YOU SAY IS **ALL RIGHT** WITH THEM!



COME, MY DEAR, YOU MUST BE **TIRED** STANDING THERE ALL THIS WHILE! REST YOUR TIRED BONES! I'D MAKE YOU TEA... BUT I KNOW YOU DON'T DRINK!



I'LL WAGER YOU'RE TRED OF
STAND NG THERE SO LONG.
GOOD GRAC OUS YOUR
BODIES ARE COLD! I'LL
TURN UP THE FIRE.



THERE! THAT'S COSIER NOW.
ISNT IT? IT'S LIKE BE NG
ALONE W TH PEOPLE WITH-
OUT PEOPLE! BECAUSE YOU
CAN'T CALL THE DEAD PEOPLE!
THE DEAD AREN'T PEOPLE
AT ALL! THAT'S WHY WE
CAN BE TRUE FRIENDS!
WE WON'T QUARREL A
BIT! IF ONLY I HAD
DISCOVERED YOU
SOONER!



AND SO BEGAN THE STRANGEST OF
FRIENDSH PS...

I JUST CAN'T KEEP
CALLING YOU "YOU" ALL THE T ME I'LL
G VE BOTH OF YOU NAMES! I'LL
CALL YOU "ELLEN"... THAT WAS MY
MOTHER'S NAME... AND YOU'LL BE
"CECILY"... THAT WAS MY
GRANDMOTHER'S NAME...



EACH EVENING EMILY TOOK THEM
OUT OF THEIR RESTING PLACE! WHEN
MIDN GHT STRUCK, BACK THEY
WENT INTO THE WALL!

YOU MUST BE TRED BOTH OF YOU.
YOU'VE BEEN LISTEN NG TO ME
SO PATIENTLY ALL EVEN NG BUT
DON'T BLAME ME... YOU BOTH
HAVE SO LITTLE TO SAY!
HAVE A GOOD NIGHT'S
REST!



VERY SOON EMILY BROWNE WAS TAKING HER COMPAN ONS IN AND OUT
OF THE WALL SO FREQUENTLY, SHE FOUND IT ADVISAB-LE TO
ATTACH A DOOR TO THE WALL...



NOW I CAN SHUT YOU IN AT NIGHT
FOR PRIVACY. SOLITUDE IS SUCH
A PRECIOUS TH NG I'LL SEE
YOU IN THE MORNING!

ONE AFTERNOON WHILE EMILY WAS
OUT SHOPP NG, A STRANGER
CAME TO THE HOUSE.

THEY WERE SAY NG N TOWN THAT
SOMEONE WAS L V NG HERE! I
GOTTA SEE THAT NOTHIN' WAS
CHANGED. MINE A N'T THE KND
OF SECRET OTHER PEOPLE CAN
FND O... (GASP!) THE STIFFS.
THEY'RE GONE!



THEY WERE HERE!
THEY COULDN'T
HAVE WALKED AWAY
T-HEY WERE TAKEN
OUT. SOMEBODY
FOUND THEM!
(GASP...) T-THAT'S
WHAT THAT DOOR
MEANS! THERE
WAS NO DOOR
HERE BEFORE!



W-WHOEVER L VES HERE, KNOWS I
MURDERED THEM! T-THE SECRET'S
OUT! (GASP!) THEY'LL LOOK FOR ME!
I'LL BE HANGED! (GASP!) MY
CHEST... UUGGGHHH!!



WHEN EMILY BROWNE CAME HOME THAT NIGHT SHE FOUND A STRANGE FIGURE LYING ON THE FLOOR..

GOOD GRACIOUS! WHAT IS HE DOING HERE?



WAIT! HE MUST BE DEAD, TOO! HE MUST'VE BEEN INSIDE THE WALL... MUST'VE BEEN DEEPER WITHIN THE WALL... TUCKED AWAY FROM SIGHT!



FORGIVE ME FOR OVERLOOKING YOU! I'M GOING TO PUT YOU **BACK** IN THE WALL AND LOCK YOU UP FOR THE NIGHT! TOMORROW WE'LL TALK ALL ABOUT IT AND WE'LL BECOME GOOD FRIENDS! NOW YOU MUST ALL REST. IT'S BEEN A TRYING DAY!



IT WAS ABOUT TWO HOURS LATER THAT THE UNCONSCIOUS STRANGER CAME TO...

(GASP!)... I'M WALLED UP WITH THE STIFFS!... L-LET ME OUT! (GASP!) LET ME OUT... I'M SUFFOCATING!... LET ME OUT!



QUIET, YOU NAUGHTY THINGS! YOU CAN'T COME OUT UNTIL THE MORNING! I'VE GOT A LOT OF MENDING TO DO... AND EMILY DOESN'T WANT TO BE DISTURBED!

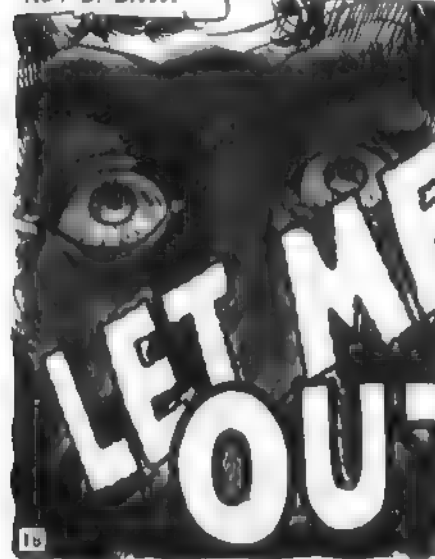
(GASP!) THERE'S SOMEONE OUT THERE!... S-SHE WON'T LET ME OUT! NO! NO!



THE STRANGER SHRIEKED... THE STRANGER KICKED... THE STRANGER STRUGGLED... BUT THE DOOR DID NOT OPEN...

THE SHRIEKING WENT ON FOR A LONG WHILE... BUT EMILY BROWNE ONLY SHRUGGED AND SMILED...

SUDDENLY THE ROOM WAS SILENT! THE STRANGER MET HIS VICTIM'S FATE! EMILY BROWNE'S FINGERS MOVED CONTENTEDLY OVER THE FABRIC SHE WAS MENDING...



I MUSTN'T LISTEN TO THEM! I MUSTN'T SPOIL THEM! THEY'LL GET TIRED SOON AND GO TO SLEEP!

THAT'S BETTER! IT'S QUIET AGAIN! FOR A MOMENT I COULD ALMOST SWEAR... THOSE WALLS WERE SPEAKING!



THE END!

SCREAMING THROUGH THE BLACK NIGHT, TWO TRAINS RACE TOWARD EACH OTHER
TOWARD AN UNKNOWN APPOINTMENT WITH **DEATH!!** THE SCREAMS OF THE VICTIMS
MIX WITH A DISTANT EVIL WALL AND OUT OF THE FIRE AND BLOOD OF THIS
MIDNIGHT CATASTROPHE WALKS...

THE DEMON FROM BEYOND



WH...WHERE AM I??

OHOOOOO...



OH--NOW I REMEMBER WAITING TO GET OFF THEN A CRASH, AN EXPLOSION.

OHOOO-- MY HEAD



TOM BRONSON WAS JUST ANOTHER PASSENGER ON THE DOOMED TRAIN, ANXIOUS TO RETURN TO HIS WIFE...HE HAD YET TO LEARN THAT THE CRASH HAD JOLTED HIM INTO A **NEW WEIRD WORLD...**



MY HEAD FEELS AS IF SOMEONE WERE BOILING MY BRAINS!! PEOPLE HURT MUST TRY TO HELP...

HELPP!! THE FIRE!! AARGHH!!

MORE WATER! PEOPLE ARE TRAPPED IN THERE!



WHAT WAS THAT? A TRAIN WRECK? M-MY HUSBAND DEAD!

YES, MRS. BRONSON. SORRY TO TELL YOU THIS. PLEASE COME DOWN TO IDENTIFY THE... **BODY!!**

SO TOM'S DEAD! WHAT A **BREAK!** I'VE GOT TO TELL BOB THE **GOOD NEWS!**

DEBBIE! ARE YOU CRAZY? I'M **HERE!**

BOB... I JUST GOT WORD THAT TOM IS DEAD! YES! KILLED IN THE WRECK! THE **FATES** MUST BE ON **OUR SIDE!** SAVES **US** THE JOB OF GETTING RID OF HIM AND HIS INSURANCE WILL PAY **DOUBLE** BECAUSE OF THE ACCIDENT!

WONDERFUL, BABY... I'LL BE RIGHT OVER!

I'M **DEAD!** THAT'S WHY **NO ONE** COULD SEE OR HEAR ME. BUT WHY SHOULD I STILL WALK THE EARTH?

RIGHT AFTER I IDENTIFY THE BODY, I'LL CALL THE INSURANCE AGENT!

OKAY, HONEY... AND THINK OF THE THINGS WE CAN DO WITH THAT MONEY!!! PARIS... ROME... MONTE CARLO...

...AM I **DEAD?** HOW DID I GET INTO THIS CAR? THIS IS A **NIGHTMARE!**

YES... SOB... THAT'S TOM... MY DEAR HUSBAND... SOB-SOB!

TERRIBLY SORRY, MRS. BRONSON!

BUT AFTER EVERYONE LEFT THE MORGUE, IN THE SILENCE THAT WAS LIKE THE QUIET OF THE TOMB... A STRANGE MEETING TOOK PLACE...

THERE LIES MY BODY... TOM BRONSON, YOU'VE BEEN **DOUBLE-CROSSED...** AND THAT'S WHY YOUR **SPIRIT WALKS IN VENGEANCE!!**



THE HAUNTING SPIRIT OF TOM BRONSON BURNED WITH VENGEANCE AS HE WATCHED THE DECEPTION OF DEBBIE AND RESTLESSLY HE WALKED THE MIDNIGHT STREETS UNTIL...

I WONDER IF I MIGHT FIND THE HELP I NEED HERE! I AM GROWING **WEARY OF WANDERING**... MY SPIRIT MUST HAVE ITS **REVENGE** AND THEN... TO **ETERNAL SLEEP!!**



MIDNIGHT WANDERERS... HEAR MY CALL! I WOULD SEND MY VOICE BEYOND THE **UNKNOWN** TO TALK WITH THE RESTLESS ONES... THE SPIRITS WHO SEEK **POWER**... HEAR ME, **UNKNOWN ONES**... OH, HEAR!!



I HAVE HEARD... AND I HAVE COME TO ASK YOU WHO **SPEAK WITH THE DEAD FOR HELP!**

YES... I WILL HELP YOU FOR A **FEE!** FOR EVEN THE DEAD MUST PAY THE **BLACK SORCERERS!**

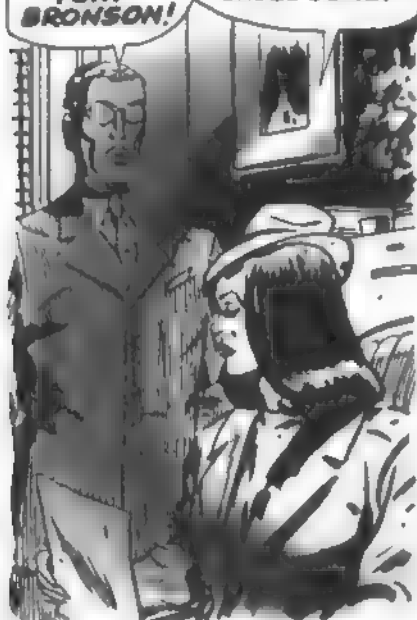
YOU WILL BE WELL PAID... NOW, FIRST YOU MUST WRITE A **LETTER FOR ME...**



AND SO... IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT THE BARGAIN IS MADE, AND A FEW DAYS LATER...

I KNOW YOU EXPECTED THE MONEY, BUT WE JUST RECEIVED THIS LETTER SIGNED BY YOUR HUSBAND **TOM BRONSON!**

BUT... BUT THAT'S **IMPOSSIBLE!** I IDENTIFIED THE BODY **MYSELF...** AND IT'S LYING IN THE FAMILY CRYPT! THIS IS SOMEBODY'S **CRUEL JOKE!**

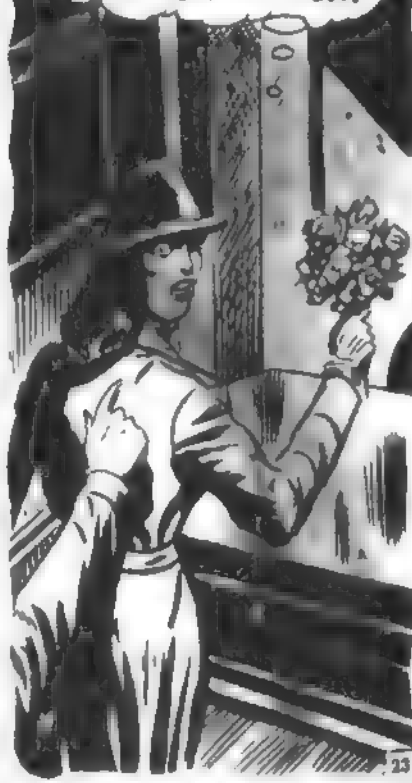


UNDOUBTEDLY YOU ARE RIGHT! BUT WE WILL HAVE TO INVESTIGATE THIS LETTER BEFORE WE CAN TURN THE MONEY OVER!

ALL RIGHT... JUST AS LONG AS IT WON'T TAKE **TOO LONG!** I'M GOING TO THE CRYPT TODAY--TO BRING FRESH FLOWERS! I MISS TOM SO...



I'LL BE GLAD WHEN THEY'VE FINALLY CEMENTED THIS CASKET AWAY SO I DON'T HAVE TO KEEP UP THIS **PRETENSE OF DEVOTION!!** WONDER ABOUT THAT LETTER! WHO... OH!



YOU...YOU ALMOST **FRIGHTENED ME TO DEATH!** WHO ARE YOU? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

MY NAME IS MADAME BOVARY! I AM A FREQUENTER OF **GRAVEYARDS...** AND I HELP THE **TROUBLED SOULS** OF THE DEAR DEPARTED! TALK WITH THE...UH... LIVING " YOU LOOK AS IF **YOU NEED HELP, MY DEAR!**

IF YOU COULD REACH TOM! ...F YOU COULD FIND OUT WHO SENT THE LETTER..?

COME TONIGHT! I WILL FIND OUT EVERYTHING YOU SEEK...FOR A CERTAIN SUM / YOU'LL FIND MY CARD RIGHT THERE ON **TOP OF THE COFFIN!**

THAT NIGHT...
THERE'S THE MONEY... NOW I WANT YOU TO CONTACT MY... JH... **DEAR HUSBAND, TOM BRONSON!**
T **WILL BE DONE! BE SEATED!**

THE RITES HAVE BEEN COMPLETED... MATERIALIZE TO HUMAN SIGHT, **UNEASY SPIRIT** OF TOM BRONSON... COME... COME...

IT IS TOM!!
NO! TAKE HIM AWAY! HE'S DEAD... DEAD!

WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ME THAT WAY, TOM?

IT'S YOUR OWN **TROUBLED CONSCIENCE** THAT MAKES YOU **FEARFUL!!** MY **SPIRIT CANNOT REST** BECAUSE YOU HAVE **BROKEN FAITH** WITH ME!!

SUDDENLY THE SILENT NIGHT IS SPLIT WITH AN HYSTERICAL SCREAM AS DEBBIE BRONSON, A VICTIM OF HER OWN FEAR FLEES FROM THE VISION OF VENGEANCE...

AIE-EEE!

**HAHAHA
HAHAHA
HAAA!**

HEEE-HEEE! NO MORTAL CAN RUN FAST ENOUGH TO ESCAPE HER OWN FAITHLESSNESS! HEE-HEEE!

LATER THAT NIGHT, THE TWO FIGURES, ONE SEEN.. AND THE OTHER **UNSEEN** WALK THRU THE GRAVE-YARD TO THE BRONSON CRYPT...

I HAVE ONE MORE REQUEST TO MAKE! I AM WEARY OF BEING A **DISEMBODIED SPIRIT!** PUT ME BACK INSIDE MY BODY... I HAVE A PLAN!

I WILL DO AS YOU ASK... BUT REMEMBER ONCE IT IS DONE, NO POWER CAN UNDO IT!



MAR R.ON BEL EF FONTOV LORREL TON!



THE NEXT DAY...

IT'LL SOON BE OVER! TODAY THE CASKET WILL BE **SEALED AWAY!** SHALL I GO IN WITH YOU?

YES... **NO!** THIS IS THE LAST TIME.. I'LL GO IN ALONE! IT'LL LOOK BETTER!



ALONE, DEBBIE APPROACHES THE CASKET FOR THE LAST TIME... ANXIOUS FOR THE FINAL CEREMONY TO BEGIN WHEN...

THAT'S STRANGE THAT THE TOP SHOULD BE OPEN... WELL SOON I'LL BE FREE OF THIS AWFUL TASK... AND BOB AND I...

HIS HANDS! THEY'RE **MOVING!** TOM... **NO!**



DON'T, TOM! PLEASE! I'LL DO ANYTHING YOU SAY... I WON'T TOUCH THE MONEY... I'LL GIVE BOB UP... I'LL...



THE POINTED EDGE OF DEATH SLOWLY INCHES TOWARD THE SOFT, PULSATING THROAT OF DEBBIE BRONSON!! HER EYES STRAIN WITH **TERROR**, HER STRENGTH WANES... AND THEN...

AAIEERGHGG-A-GG!

GREAT SCOTT! WHAT WAS THAT?



OH! THE POOR THING! SHE'S **KILLED HERSELF!**

GLESS SHE **COULDN'T** LIVE WITHOUT HIM!



THE END

The DEVIL'S FIDDLE

OUT OF THE DEPTHS OF EVIL OFTTIMES COME STRANGE FORCES THAT DRIVE MEN ONWARDS TO THE ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR SOULS! THIS WAS TO BE THE FATE OF THE MUSICIAN, ULRICO ANTONIO... BUT HE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS BARGAINING FOR WHEN HE OFFERED HIS LIFE AND SOUL TO OWN A STRADIVARIUS...

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE ULRICO! STOP PLAYING THAT ACCURSED VIOLIN!

ULRICO ANTONIO AND HIS ACCOMPANIST, GIOVANNI MONTI, HAD JUST COMPLETED A SCHEDULED CONCERT IN A SMALL TOWN IN ITALY! ATTENDANCE WAS VERY POOR. AS IT ALWAYS SEEMED TO BE LATELY...

DON'T BOTHER COMING BACK THIS WAY NEXT YEAR, MR. ANTONIO! ALL I DO ON YOUR CONCERTS IS LOSE MONEY!

I WOULDN'T PLAY FOR THIS IGNORANT AUDIENCE AT TWICE THE FEE!



YOU KNOW
YOU REALLY
DON'T PLAY
TOO WELL
TONIGHT!

IF ONLY I HAD A
STRADIVARIUS, THE
WORLD WOULD HEAR
MUSIC IT HAD NEVER
HEARD BEFORE!



HERE'S A COIN, OLD MAN..
YOU HAVE ABOUT AS LARGE
AN AUDIENCE AS
I HAD TONIGHT!

THANK
YOU,
SIR!



THE TWO MEN WERE ABOUT TO
GO INTO THE INN WHEN THE OLD
BEGGAR SPOKE WORDS THAT
STOPPED ANTONIO DEAD IN
HIS TRACKS...

SO YOU WOULD
LIKE TO OWN A
STRADIVARIUS, EH?

WH-WHAT?
H-HOW DID
YOU KNOW?



I KNOW MANY THINGS...
I KNOW WHERE YOU
CAN GET ONE IF YOU
WOULD COME WITH
ME TO MY COTTAGE!

YES... YES!
I'LL COME!



THE OLD BEGGAR LED THEM BACK THROUGH
DARK, WINDING STREETS... EACH STEP FILLED
MONTI'S HEART WITH INCREASING FEAR...

JURICO... THERE'S
SOMETHING... SOME
THING STRANGE
ABOUT THIS! LET'S
TURN BACK!

DON'T BE A FOOL!
MAYBE HE DOES
KNOW WHERE TO GET
A STRADIVARIUS!
IF NOT... WHAT
HARM IS DONE?



AND AT LAST THEY REACHED
A DESERTED COTTAGE.

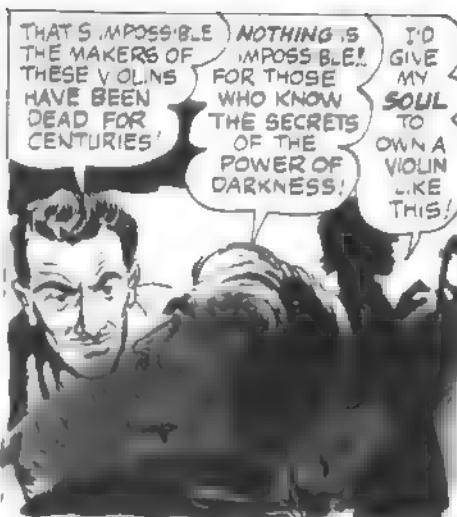
HERE IT IS!
COME IN,
PLEASE!



THE AIR INSIDE THE COTTAGE SEEMED TO BEAR DOWN
ON THE TWO MEN WITH AN OPPRESSIVENESS AS IF
THEY WERE AT THE BOTTOM OF A GRAVE. IN THAT
INSTANT EVEN ANTONIO WOULD HAVE TURNED AND
LEFT, EXCEPT FOR ONE THING...

I THINK MAYBE
WE'D BETTER.

WAIT! LET ME SHOW
YOU WHAT YOU HAVE
COME TO SEE!



FEAR OF THE UNKNOWN GRIPPED THE HEARTS OF THE TWO MEN AS THEY RUSHED MADLY AWAY FROM THE BURNING COTTAGE THEN...



WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?

QUICK...THE OLD MAN... TRAPPED...

THE COTTAGE... BURNING...

YOU TWO MEN MUST'VE HAD A LITTLE TOO MUCH TO DRINK! THERE NEVER WAS A BEGGAR ON THIS STREET AND... AS FOR A BURNING COTTAGE... YOU CAN SEE FOR YOURSELF...

BUT... I SWEAR...



WHERE'S THIS PLACE YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?

I-I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT! IT WAS RIGHT HERE!

THE BLIND BEGGAR LIVED THERE



YES THE COTTAGE HAD DISAPPEARED...AS THOUGH IT HAD NEVER EXISTED! AND MONTI FOUND HE COULD NO LONGER HOLD THE HORRIBLE THOUGHT WITHIN...

ANTONIO...DON'T YOU SEE? THE OLD BEGGAR... YOU SAID YOU WOULD GIVE YOUR SOUL FOR THE STRADIVARIUS! WHAT IF HE WERE THE... **DEVIL HIMSELF!**

I DON'T CARE! I HAVE THE ANSWERS NOW! DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT MEANS?



ANTONIO WOULD SAY NO MORE AND THAT NIGHT THEY BOARDED A TRAIN...A GNAWING FEAR OF TERROR YET TO COME PREYED ON MONTI'S MIND...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT!

I KNOW THE SECRET OF GETTING A STRADIVARIUS! IT MUST HAVE BEEN POURED INTO MY BRAIN WHILE I WAS PLAYING THE BEGGAR'S VIOLIN!...NOW...WE HAVE TO HURRY!

WON'T YOU GIVE UP THIS MAD IDEA BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE? OR... AT LEAST WON'T YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU ARE PLANNING TO DO?

NO MY FRIEND, IT'S BETTER THAT YOU DON'T KNOW!





LOOKING NEITHER TO LEFT NOR RIGHT... AS THOUGH INSPIRED BY SOME UNSEEN VOICE... ANTONIO LED THE WAY INTO THE CRUMBLING CASTLE...



BUT ANTONIO WAS BEYOND THE POWER OF ANY ARGUMENT AND THE TWO MEN CARRIED THE GRISLY BURDEN OUT OF THE CASTLE AND INTO THE OPEN, WHERE THE FULL LIGHT OF THE MOON WAS ABLE TO SHINE DOWN UPON IT! THEN, ANTONIO PICKED UP HIS VIOLIN AND BEGAN TO PLAY...



THEN SUDDENLY A GHOSTLY MOAN ESCAPES THROUGH THE LIPS OF THE MAN. IF MAN HE COULD BE CALLED. GRADUALLY, HE ROSE AND OPENED HIS MOUTH...



I KNOW YOU WERE ONCE A FAMOUS VIOLINMAKER! I COMMAND YOU TO MAKE FOR ME A VIOLIN!



DAY AFTER DAY THE BODY RETURNED FROM THE DEAD AND WORKED ON

HOW LONG CAN HE CONTINUE LIKE THIS... WITHOUT FOOD OR REST?

UNTIL I COMMAND HIM TO STOP HE IS MINE TO CONTROL!



WONDERFUL! WONDERFUL! GIVE IT TO ME!

IT IS COMPLETED, MASTER!



THE COLD MOONLIGHT SEEMED TO PLAY WITH GREATER INTENSITY AS ANTONIO DREW THE BOW ACROSS THE STRINGS OF HIS NEW VIOLIN! MAYBE IT WAS A PREMONITION OF A GREATER DANGER... MAYBE IT WAS THE FEAR OF THE UNNATURAL FORCES AT WORK... BUT MONTI COULD STAND THE STRAIN NO LONGER..

THEN SUDDENLY THERE WAS A BLINDING FLASH...

OH, MY EYES! MY EYES!

ARGHHHH!



FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE ULRICO! STOP PLAYING THAT CURSED VIOLIN!



WHEN MONTI FINALLY MANAGED TO RECOVER HIS VISION WHAT HE SAW WAS ALMOST ENOUGH TO DRIVE HIM OUT OF HIS SENSES...

GOOD LORD!
THE SKELETON!
ULRICO!

TRYING TO RETAIN HIS SELF
CONTROL, MONTI MOVED THE BONES
FROM THE BODY OF HIS FRIEND...

ULRICO! IT IS I,
YOUR FRIEND!

I CAN'T SEE!
I MUST GO TO
GENOA... I HAVE
WORK TO
DO!

THE JOURNEY TO GENOA WAS A SAD
ONE! AT LAST THEY REACHED THE
SPOT ANTONIO SEEMED TO HAVE
BEEN SEARCHING FOR...

MUST GO TO
GENOA...
MUST GO...

YES, YES... ULRICO!
I WILL TAKE YOU
THERE!

ARE YOU SURE
YOU'LL BE ALL
RIGHT?

LEAVE ME HERE
I HAVE WORK TO
DO!

ANTONIO STOOD AT THAT ONE SPOT
PLAYING HIS VIOLIN, UNTIL...

YOU PLAY
VERY WELL!

THAT'S BECAUSE I
HAVE A STRADIVARIUS!
I CAN GET ONE FOR
YOU, TOO.

Y-YOU CAN? OH... I'D GIVE
ANYTHING I OWN TO HAVE
SUCH A VIOLIN!

GOOD!
GOOD!
COME
WITH
ME!

YES... EVIL LIVES ON... AND
ANTONIO **DID** HAVE WORK TO
DO! A CYCLE OF HORROR ONCE
BEGUN, WILL CONTINUE AS
LONG AS MEN ARE WILLING
TO BARGAIN ALL FOR AN
INTENSE DESIRE!

THE
END!

Horror Harbor

OUT OF THE SEA THEY
CAME, DREADFUL DROWNED
THINGS IN SEARCH OF
VENGEANCE.' MALIGNANT
EYES, IN SLIME-COVERED
FACES, FOLLOWED EVERY
MOVEMENT OF THE
NEWCOMERS TO
BARTLEY MANOR.' AND
NEARBY, BROODING IN
THE STORM, WERE
THE FEARFUL ROCKS
KNOWN AS THE
WEIRD WOMEN..

AS DUSK FALLS, JAMES RANSOME AND HIS BRIDE OF A WEEK ARRIVE IN A VILLAGE ON THE CORNISH COAST...

TOBACCO
Periodicals
RENTING AGENT

THIS MUST BE THE PLACE WHERE I PICK UP THE KEYS, JANE! JUST BE A MINUTE!

GET THE
LONDON
PAPERS
WHILE
U'RE AT
DARLING!

**JAMES RANSOME
GETS A STRANGE
WARNING...**

YOU SHOULD KNOW
THE STORIES ABOUT
BARTLEY MANOR, SIR!
THEY AREN'T PRETTY!
WEIRD THINGS HAPPEN, I'M
TOLD! NOBODY WILL LIVE
THERE!

SPLENDID! FINE!
I'M DOING A NOVEL
ABOUT THE OLD
WRECKERS
ALONG THIS
COAST AND I
CAN USE
MATERIAL!
BUT THANKS
FOR THE
WARNING!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

WE MADE A GOOD CHOICE, JANE!
WE'VE ALREADY BEEN WARNED
AGAINST GHOSTS!
HAH-HAH!

IT IS
SILLY, I SUPPOSE!
JUST THE SAME I
DON'T-UGHH-LIKE
THE LOOKS OF
THIS OLD HOUSE!

HAN-HAN.

NONSENSE! FOR MY PURPOSE THIS PLACE IS IDEAL! I'LL DO A NOVEL ABOUT THE OLD WRECKERS THAT WILL MAKE THE CRITICS SIT UP!

GIVES ME THE SHIVERS JUST THE SAME! TO THINK—THEY USED TO LURE SHIPS TO THEIR DEATH RIGHT ON THIS SPOT!

GIVES ME
THE SHIVERS
JUST THE
SAME! TO
THINK—THEY
USED TO
LURE SHIPS
TO THEIR
DEATH
RIGHT
ON THIS
SPOT!

SUDDENLY...

HAH-HAH-HA-HO-HO-EEE-

JIM! LISTEN -
THAT HORRIBLE
LAUGHTER!

GREAT SCOTT!
COMING FROM
SOMEWHERE
IN THIS
HOUSE!

JIM! LISTEN—
THAT HORRIBLE
LAUGHTER!

SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM
BACK HERE—MAYBE IN THE
KITCHENS OR SERVANTS'
QUARTERS!

OH—I
WISH WE
HADN'T COME. I'M
FRIGHTENED, JIM!

HAH-HAH-HEE
HO-HO-

A DOOR CREAKS AS IT SLOWLY OPENS...

AN OLD WOMAN!

OH!

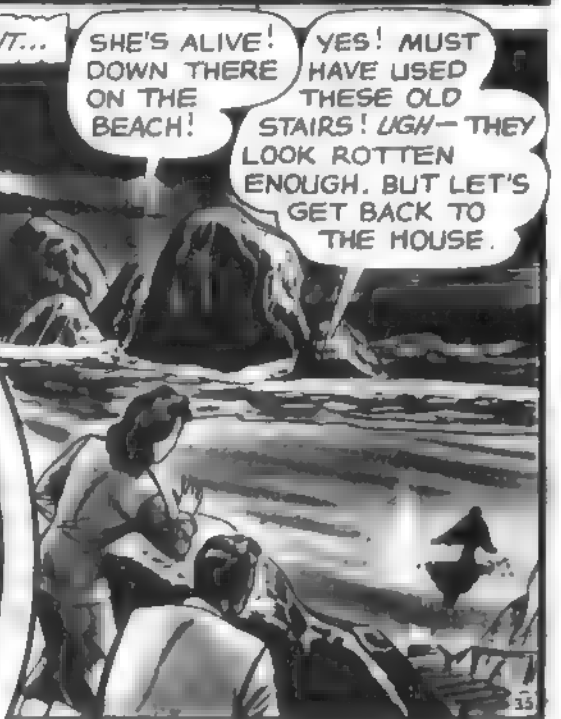
HEE-HEE - COME IN, MY DEARS! YOU NEEDN'T BE AFRAID OF OLD BESS!

34

ON!

HEE-HEE—
COME IN, MY DEARS!
YOU NEEDN'T BE
AFRAID OF OLD
BESS!

OLD BESS
WON'T HURT YE!
HAH-HAH! I KNOWED
YE WAS COMING ALL
THE TIME! COMING TO
LIVE IN THIS HOUSE
OF MURDER, BE YE?
HO-HO—YE'LL
BE SORRY!
BLOOD BUILT
THIS HOUSE
AND BLOOD
WILL DESTROY
IT! HEE-EEE-
EEEE—



THE NEXT AFTERNOON...

THOSE ROCKS ARE CALLED THE WEIRD

WOMEN! THE BARTLEYS, WHO BUILT THE MANOR, USED TO HANG LANTERNS ON THE ROCKS TO LURE SHIPS! THEY WRECKED SCORES OF SHIPS BEFORE THEY WERE CAUGHT AND HANGED!

LOOK AT THAT OLD HULK OUT THERE! MUST BE—UGH—ONE OF THE SHIPS!

UNDOUBTEDLY! THIS PLACE IS A GOLD MINE, JANE! MY NOVEL WILL BE THE MOST AUTHENTIC WORK ON THE WRECKERS THAT EVER...

JIM! LOOK! THE OLD WRECK!



NO-NO-NO-
HAH-HAH-HEE-
EEE—

GAD! IT'S THAT CRAZY OLD WOMAN AGAIN!

AND SHE'S ON THAT WRECK, JIM! SHE MUST LIVE OUT THERE!

COME, MY DEARS!
I KNOW YE WANT TO!
COME AND VISIT OLD BESS ON HER SHIP!
HAH-HAH-HEE-HEE—
OLD BESS REMEMBERS!
OLD BESS WAS THE ONLY ONE AS WASN'T DROWNED!
COME!



JIM RANSOME FEELS A STRANGE COMPULSION TO TALK TO THE OLD HAG...

I MUST TALK TO HER, JANE! I SIMPLY MUST! THERE'S SOMETHING VERY ODD ABOUT ALL THIS—MAYBE SHE KNOWS SOMETHING THAT WILL HELP ME!

I WON'T STAY HERE ALONE! OH—BE CAREFUL OF THOSE STAIRS!

THEY REACH THE BEACH SAFELY AND...

SHE'S COMING TO MEET US, JIM!

MAYBE SHE'S NOT AS CRAZY AS I THOUGHT! I HOPE SHE CAN ANSWER QUESTIONS INTELLIGENTLY!





WITHOUT WARNING THE SKY DARKENS, AND A STORM BURSTS IN FURY...

H-HOW CAN A STORM COME UP SO QUICKLY, JIM?

STRANGE! BUT WE'LL RUN FOR IT AS SOON AS I HAVE A WORD WITH THIS OLD WOMAN!

HAH-HAH-A LOVELY STORM, MY DEARS! JUST LIKE THE ONE ON THAT NIGHT! THE NIGHT THEY WRECKED US! A TERRIBLE STORM IT WAS...

STRANGE EXCITEMENT MOVES IN THE MIND OF JIM RANSOME! AS A WRITER, HE SENSES A FANTASTIC STORY...

OLD WOMAN! BESS! DO YOU MEAN YOU WERE WRECKED ON THIS COAST?

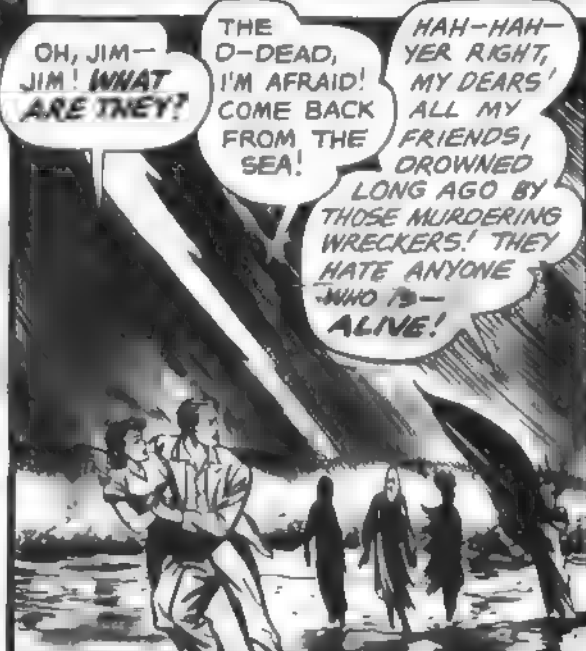
AYE-THAT I WAS! ALL OF THEM DROWNED! ALL DEAD-BUT ME!

INCREDIBLE! THE LAST SHIP WAS WRECKED IN 1823! BUT...



SUDDENLY, JANE RANSOME SEES - WHAT?

JIM-LOOK BEHIND YOU! EEEEEEE-



OH, JIM-JIM! WHAT ARE THEY?

THE O-DEAD, I'M AFRAID! COME BACK FROM THE SEA!

HAH-HAH-YER RIGHT, MY DEARS! ALL MY FRIENDS, DROWNED LONG AGO BY THOSE MURDERING WRECKERS! THEY HATE ANYONE WHO IS-ALIVE!



RUN FOR IT, JANE! RUN!

OH-H-

GET THEM, MY OLD FRIENDS! KILL THEM-MAKE THEM LIKE YOU! WHY SHOULD THEY LIVE?



HURRY-HURRY! THEY'LL TEAR US TO PIECES!

OH-H-THE STAIRS SWAY SO! IF WE FALL...



AS THEY REACH THE TOP OF THE ROTTING STAIRS...

ONE CHANCE! IF I CAN — (GASP) — LOOSEN THESE OLD STAIRS THEY CAN'T GET TO US!

HURRY—HURRY! THEY'RE ALMOST TO THE TOP!



THERE! JUST IN TIME!

OH, THANK GOODNESS! THOSE HORRIBLE CREATURES!



A PITY I CAN NEVER WRITE THIS, BUT NOBODY WOULD BELIEVE IT! IMAGINE— THAT OLD CRONE WAS ACTUALLY WRECKED HERE IN 1823!

LET'S LEAVE THIS PLACE AT ONCE!

DIE—DIE! EVERYONE MUST BE DEAD BUT ME!

EEEEEEEE—

JANE! MY—



JANE RANSOME TURNS THEN—AND SCREAMS...

I—JIM! HELP! SHE'S HERE...

HA—HAH—HAH—HAH—YOU WON'T ESCAPE OLD BESS!

HUH! WHA...

YOU MURDERING OLD HAG! I'LL SEND YOU WHERE YOU—(SOB)—BELONG! YOU K-KILLED JANE!

HEE—HEE—WE'LL ALL DIE SOON! OH—HAH—HAH!



A SLIP OF JIM RANSOME'S FOOT AND HE FOLLOWS HIS WIFE INTO THE ABYSS...

IT SEEMS TO JIM RANSOME THAT EDONS PASS BEFORE HE RECOVERS HIS SENSES. STRANGELY ENOUGH, HE IS ALIVE—OR IS HE?

GAAAAAA—

HEE—HEE—
WE'LL BOTH
BE KILLED!
HAH—HAH—
HAH!

OH—MY HEAD! BUT NO
BONES SEEM TO BE BROKEN!
AND I CAN'T REMEMBER
JUST WHAT HAPPENED,
EXCEPT THAT THE OLD
CRONE AND I WERE..

DESPERATELY, HE
SEARCHES THE
LONELY SANDS...

I REMEMBER NOW!
JANE FELL! JANE!
WHERE ARE
YOU? JANE!

SUDDENLY, JIM HEARS A SOFT SOUND,
A CRY, AND WHEN HE TURNS...

JIM! HERE I AM!
I'M GLAD YOU CAME
TO ME! I WANTED YOU
TO FOLLOW ME!

JANE! YOUR
FACE!
Y—YOU'RE
LIKE THEM!

COME TO ME! WE
ARE AS THEY ARE
NOW! WE WILL LIVE
TOGETHER IN THE
SEA FOREVER!

NO! KEEP AWAY
FROM ME! YOU'RE
NOT JANE! YOU'RE
SOME HORROR FROM
THE PIT! STAY
AWAY...

JAMES RANSOME
STUMBLES, AND IN
THE QUIET MIRROR
OF THE SEA...

HUH! I—
AAHHHHHHHH—



UP FROM THE FETID
HOLDS THEY SWARMED, SCENTING BLOOD,
AVID FOR THE KILL! NOTHING COULD STAND
BEFORE THE CRAWLING GRAY HORDES, AND
MEN DIED, SCREAMING IN AGONY, HELPLESS
BEFORE THE REVOLT OF THE RATS !!

THE S.S. ATLANTIS, AN ANCIENT RUST POT, IS IN
MID-PACIFIC WHEN DISASTER STRIKES...

SO WE COMMEND
THIS POOR BODY
TO THE DEEP!

GOODBYE
TO JOE!

A FUNNY
DEATH! I DON'T
LIKE IT!

NOR DOES CAPTAIN JEFF BOLDEN
LIKE IT! HE KNOWS SOMETHING
THAT THE CREW DOESN'T...

THAT POOR DEVIL HAD
CHOLERA! AND WE'VE GOT
NO DOCTOR, NO MEDICINES,
NOTHING! I DARE NOT
TELL THE CREW OR
THEY'LL PANIC!

BUT THE CREW SOON KNOWS...

AT THAT VERY MOMENT IN THE CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS...

OHH--MY
INSIDES BURN!
D-DYING!

HELP ME--
WATER!

IT'S CHOLERA!
WE'LL ALL DIE!

WE'RE IN BAD
TROUBLE, WOLFE!
MOST OF THE
MEN ARE DOWN
WITH CHOLERA
ALREADY! HARDLY
ENOUGH LEFT TO
WORK THE SHIP.

AND THERE'S
SOMETHING ELSE,
SIR! WORSE THAN
THE CHOLERA
EVEN! RATS!

THE NEXT DAY...

RATS ?
YOU MEAN--?

YES, SIR! THEY'RE
GETTING TOO BOLD! THEY
SEEM TO KNOW WE'RE IN
TROUBLE! AND THEY'RE
SWARMING-- NEVER SAW
SO MANY RATS IN MY LIFE!
GOT ME SCARED, SIR!

GREAT
SCOTT!

LOOK AT THAT, SIR!
THOSE MEN BEING
ATTACKED!

THEY'RE
HELPLESS! GOT
TO GAVE THEM!

WHERE DO THEY
ALL COME FROM?
THE SHIP'S ROTTEN
WITH THEM!

FILTHY BRUTES!
I HATE THEM!

AND WHEN THE RATS FINALLY ARE
BEATEN OFF...

LOOK AT THAT!
PICKED CLEAN!

UGH!
WE'VE GOT A FIGHT ON OUR
HANDS NOW! IF WE LOSE,
WE'LL LOOK
LIKE THAT!

DAY
AFTER
GRUESOME
DAY
PASSES
AND THE
SAILORS
DIE ONE
BY ONE!
THOSE
SPARED
BY THE
CHOLERA
MYSTERIOUSLY
DISAPPEARED!
FINALLY
ONLY
CAPTAIN
BOLDEN
AND THE
MATE ARE
LEFT..."

THEY'LL GET
US, SIR! I FEEL
IT! WE'LL BOTH
GO LIKE THE REST.

KEEP YOU ~~NERVE~~
YOU FOOL! KEEP
FIRING! WE'RE
DRIFTING, HELP-
LESS, BUT
THERE'S ALWAYS
A CHANCE WE'LL
SIGHT ANOTHER
SHIP!

SUDDENLY...

AHHH--THEY
GOT ME! HELP,
SIR!!

COMING, MAN!
FIGHT THEM!
PULL THEM OFF!

EEEE!
I'M COVERED
WITH BITES!

COME ON! OUR
ONLY CHANCE IS
TO GET HIGH
IN THE
RIGGING!

THAT WON'T
STOP THEM!
THEY'LL EAT US
ALIVE!

LOOK AT
THAT!
THEY'VE
TAKEN OVER
THE SHIP!

WON'T BE LONG
UNTIL THEY START
UP AFTER US! HATE
TO ADMIT IT, BUT IT
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE
DONE!

HERE THEY
COME!

EEEEEE!



GAA! I CAN'T STAND THIS! I'LL GO CRAZY!

FIGHT, YOU FOOL! THEY HAVEN'T GOT US YET! KEEP FIGHTING!



LOOK AT THAT! THEY'RE GNAWING AT THE RIGGING! THEY WANT US TO FALL!

THOSE BRUTES CAN THINK! THEY'RE OUTSMARTING US!!



SUDDENLY CAPTAIN HOLDEN SEES SOMETHING...

LAND! AN ISLAND OF SOME SORT! AND THE TIDE IS TAKING US IN! IF ONLY THERE'S TIME!



AND A TERRIBLE IDEA COMES TO HIM...

TIME! I NEED TIME! IF I COULD GIVE THEM SOMETHING-LIKE THE MATE!

FIVE MINUTES LATER...



SORRY, WOLFE! IT'S YOU OR ME! WHILE THEY EAT YOU, MAYBE WE'LL DRIFT CLOSER TO THAT ISLAND AND I CAN SAVE MYSELF!

GAAA! NO!



UGH--HE'S G-GONE ALREADY! THEY'LL BE AFTER ME NOW!



G-GOT TO GET TO THE TOP OF THIS CLIFF! M-MAYBE I CAN FIGHT THEM OFF! A SHIP MIGHT COME-- ANYTHING! I CAN'T DIE LIKE THIS!



A PIT! MIGHT LEAD DOWN INTO THE CLIFF! MAYBE I CAN HIDE SO...

BOLDEN DID ESCAPE WHEN THE RATS ATTACKED WOLFE AND SOUGHT REFUGE ON A NEARBY ISLAND...BUT WAS IT AN ESCAPE FROM THE HUNGRY RODENTS?



NOTHING! STRAIGHT DOWN AND DARK! NO WAY TO GET DOWN! I- I'LL BE KILLED THAT WAY, TOO!



HERE THEY COME FOR ME! THEY'LL EAT ME ALIVE UNLESS I CHEAT THEM!



YOU WON'T GET ME AFTER ALL! HAH-HAH-- I'VE CHEATED YOU FILTHY BRUTES AT LAST! **EEEE!!**



The End

LEE TALBOT HAD A FORMULA THAT MIGHT HAVE BROUGHT HIM \$1,000,000 -- BUT HE ALSO HAD --

A SKELETON in the Closet

MEMO FROM RALPH BAIRD...
GHOST WRITER...

YES, I WAS A WRITER
WHO "GHOSTED" STORIES FOR
OTHER PEOPLE... AND NOW I'M
CONTINUING MY CAREER FROM
THE BEYOND! HERE IS THE
SPINE-TINGLING TALE OF A
FELLOW GHOST, PROFESSOR
SPARTACUS DUBROW...

IT WORKS! THE FORMULA IS
PERFECT! THE SECRET OF VRIL
IS MINE! PROF. DUBROW
SHOULD BE HERE TO SEE
THIS IN THE FLESH!
HEHEHEHEHEH!

FOR YEARS, PROF. DUBROW HAD BEEN
RUNNING THE VITREX RESEARCH FOUNDATION
WITH ONLY ONE ASSISTANT, A TECHNICIAN
NAMED LEE TALBOT...

LOOK, LEE! AT LAST--
THE VERY FORMULA
I'VE SOUGHT!

GOOD WORK, PRO-
FESSOR! NOW YOU
CAN CLOSE UP SHOP,
AND WE CAN BOTH
TAKE A VACATION!

FIRST, THOUGH, LET'S CLEAN UP
THE LAB -- ALL THESE DEAD
FLIES AND INSECTS THAT
HAVE BEEN LYING AROUND
SINCE LAST SUMMER...

WAIT, LEE!
THEY'RE THE
VERY THINGS I
NEED TO PROVE
THAT MY FORMULA
WILL WORK!

YOU THOUGHT I WAS WORKING ON A FORMULA THAT WOULD PROLONG LIFE FOR PERHAPS A FEW YEARS---

BUT INSTEAD, I WAS DEVELOPING AN ELIXIR TO RESTORE LIFE! WATCH!

THERE IS THE LIVING PROOF OF IT!

AS OLD PROF. DUBROW HOBBOLED BACK TO HIS WORK BENCH, AN EVIL SCHEME FLASHED THROUGH LEE'S WARPED MIND...

AND WHEN DUBROW LAID HIS CANE ASIDE...

THERE'S A FORTUNE IN IT IF I CAN GET RID OF THE OLD MAN!

THESE NOTES CONTAIN MY FULL FORMULA-- THE GREATEST BOON EVER OFFERED TO MANKIND!

THAT ONE CLOUT REALLY FINISHED HIM! NOW I'LL DUMP THE BODY IN OUR CHEMICAL VAT---

--AND GIVE IT AN ACID TREATMENT! NOBODY WILL EVER RECOGNIZE OLD DUBROW AFTER THIS! HEH-HEH!

BY THE NEXT DAY, LEE TALBOT
HAD GONE THROUGH ALL OF
DUBROW'S EFFECTS...

SOME POST CARDS THE PROFESSOR
ADDRESSED BUT NEVER MAILED,
THE LAST TIME HE TOOK A
VACATION! I'LL GO TO THOSE
PLACES AND MAIL THE CARDS
MYSELF! THAT WILL FOOL
PEOPLE!



BUT FIRST I'D BETTER
GATHER UP WHAT THE
ACID LEFT OF PROF.
DUBROW---



-- AND PUT IT IN THIS CLOSET
THAT THE PROFESSOR ALWAYS
KEPT LOCKED? I CAN SAY
IT'S BEEN AROUND FOR
YEARS-- WHICH IT
HAS! HEH!



AS FOR THE CLUB I
USED, I'LL STICK IT
HERE IN THE YARD---



THEN POUR WHAT'S
LEFT OF THE VRIL
INTO THIS SPRAY
GUN---



AND GIVE THE CANE
A FULL-FLEDGED
TREATMENT!



SO LEE TALBOT MADE A QUICK
TRIP, MAILED THE POST CARDS,
AND RETURNED...

OH-OH! THE BUSH IS DROOPY!
LUCKY I STILL HAVE SOME
VRIL IN THE SPRAY GUN!



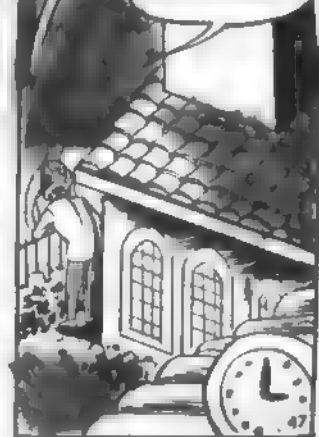
WHAT'S THE
TROUBLE,
MR. TALBOT?
ROSE
BUGS?

THAT'S RIGHT, HERVEY!
ROSE BUGS!



BY THE WAY, CAN YOU
STOP AROUND TOMORROW
AND CLEAN THE PLACE UP
BEFORE PROF. DUBROW
RETURNS?

SURE THING,
MR. TALBOT!



LEE TALBOT WORKED FURIOUSLY THROUGH THE NIGHT...

THERE, THAT'S DONE! A MILLION DOLLARS WORTH OF VRIL, FOR PEOPLE WHO LOVE LIFE ENOUGH TO PAY FOR IT! SORRY YOU'RE NOT HERE IN THE FLESH TO SEE IT, PROFESSOR!

ON SECOND THOUGHT, IT'S JUST AS WELL YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING, YOU OLD BONEYARD! YOU WERE GOING TO GIVE THE STUFF AWAY!

I'D BETTER LOCK YOU AWAY UNTIL HERVEY GETS HERE!

WHICH REMINDS ME, I'D BETTER FRESHEN UP OUR ROSE BUSH! WE SHOULD KEEP OUR LITTLE SECRETS, SHOULDN'T WE?

THE PROFESSOR'S FRIENDS SHOULD BE GETTING THOSE POST CARDS BY NOW! THEY'LL NEVER GUESS WHERE OR WHEN HE DISAPPEARED-- OR HOW!

SO ALL WAS SERENE AND THE PERFECT CRIME WAS WORKING TO PERFECTION, WHEN HERVEY ARRIVED FOR CLEAN-UP DUTY...

HELLO, HERVEY! THIS PLACE HASN'T BEEN CLEANED FOR MONTHS, SO YOU'VE A BIG JOB AHEAD OF YOU! I'LL UNLOCK THE CLOSET, SO YOU CAN CLEAN IN THERE, TOO!

A-- A SKELETON! YOWW!

DON'T LET IT SCARE YOU! PROF. DUBROW USED IT IN HIS EXPERIMENTS! SEE YOU LATER, HERVEY!

AS HERVEY STARTED
WORK, A LONE
BUTTERFLY BUZZED
PAST HIS NOSE...



SO THE JANITOR
GRABBED THE
SPRAY GUN THAT
WAS LYING
HANDY...



BUT AS HE TRIED TO
KILL THE BUTTERFLY,
OTHER INSECTS
CAME TO LIFE...



AND THE MORE HERVEY
SPRAYED, THE THICKER
THEY BECAME, UNTIL...



THEY'RE EVEN
GETTING IN THE
CLOSET! I'D
BETTER CLEAN
THEM OUT OF
THERE-- THAT'S
FOR SURE!



HELLO, HERVEY--
DO YOU REMEM-
BER ME?

THE--THE
SKELETON--
IT'S COME
TO LIFE!



OF COURSE I'VE COME TO LIFE,
HERVEY-- THANKS TO YOU! I'M
PROF. DUBROW! I WANT YOU
TO HELP ME EVEN SCORES WITH
THE MAN WHO
MURDERED ME!

SURE-- SURE
THING, PRO-
FESSOR!



IN THAT DRAWER, HERVEY, YOU
WILL FIND A LOADED REVOLVER!

NOT IF I GET THERE
FIRST,
HE
WON'T!



LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE OUT OF
LUCK, HERVEY-- JUST LIKE
THE PROFESSOR WAS!

GRAB HIM, HERVEY,
OR HE'LL KILL YOU!







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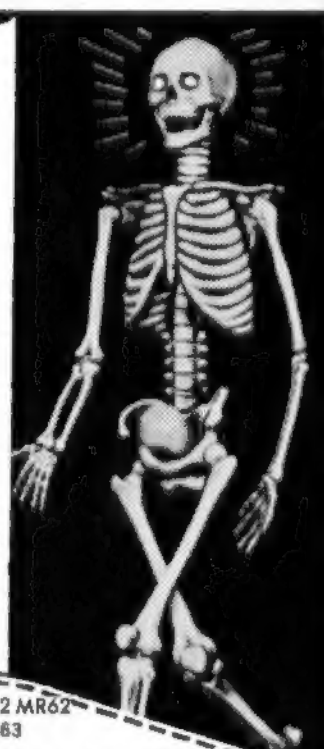
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GRADUALLY, BUT SURELY, LEE TALBOT
SUCCUMBED TO THE GRIP OF THOSE
BONY FINGERS...

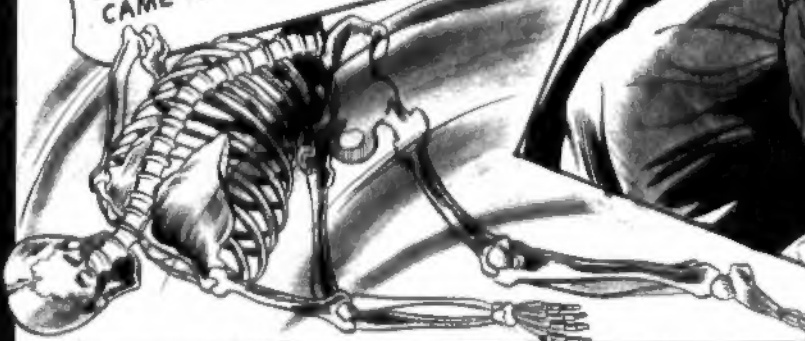
THE VRIL-- IT'S ALL
LEAKED AWAY-- BUT
MY FORMULA
IS HERE!

I MUST MAKE MORE--
BEFORE MY TEMPORARY
STRENGTH IS--IS--GONE--



BEFORE THE SKELETON HAND COULD ADD THE FINAL INGREDIENT, ITS
STRENGTH GAVE OUT... AS HOURS PASSED, THE REMNANTS OF THE PRICE-
LESS ELIXIR BOILED AWAY, WHILE THE BONES OF ITS INVENTOR LAY
MOTIONLESS UPON THE FLOOR... DAYS FOLLOWED, AND FINALLY MEN
CAME TO THE SILENT LABORATORY, TO FIND A STRANGE SCENE...

APPARENTLY HERVEY
WAS CHOKING TALBOT
TO DEATH WHEN LEE
MANAGED TO SHOOT HIM!
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE
FOR LEE TO SAVE
HIS OWN LIFE!



BUT WHY SHOULD
THEY HAVE BEEN
FIGHTING OVER
A SKELETON?

IT DOESN'T MAKE
SENSE -- BUT
NEITHER DOES
THIS BATCH OF
PAPERS! MIGHT AS
WELL TOSS THEM IN
THE STOVE!

I WONDER WHERE
PROF. DUBROW
WENT-- AND WHY
HE LEFT HIS
CANE STUCK
HERE IN THE
GROUND?

IT
BEATS
ME,
TOO!

LIKE THAT YARN...
HMM? -- I KNOW
WHERE PROF. DUBROW WENT... DO YOU?
... WE BOTH KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN
THE LAB, THOUGH-- YOUR GHOST
WRITER-- THAT'S ME!-- GOT
THE INSIDE STORY!

